The Planning Inspectorate

Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 23 November 2016

by R W Allen B.Sc PGDip MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government

Decision date: 15 December 2016

Appeal Ref: APP/A2525/W/16/3156533
Wingland Aero Club, Wingland Airfield, Green Dyke, Lutton, Spalding, Lincolnshire PE12 0BF

- The appeal is made under section 78 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 against a refusal to grant outline planning permission.
- The appeal is made by Wingland Aero Club against the decision of South Holland District Council.
- The application Ref H06-0246-16, dated 4 March 2016, was refused by notice dated 11 May 2016.
- The development proposed is provision of facilities for the management of Wingland members and visitors.

Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Preliminary Matter

2. The appeal proposal is in outline form with all matters reserved for subsequent approval. Any other details shown which would be a reserved matter, such as the layout, I shall treat as being indicative only.

Main Issue

3. The main issue is whether or not the location of the proposed development is acceptable having regard to relevant policies to promote sustainable development.

Reasons

4. The appeal site is an airfield used for the flying of microlight aircraft and model airplanes. A small area of the land is also used for quad bike activities. The site contains a collection of buildings used as hangers for the storage of said aircraft as well as a club house. A mobile structure lies at the site's entrance. The remainder of the site is open land, surrounded by countryside.

5. Neither main party disputes the use requires a rural location, and I have no reason to disagree. Paragraph 28 of the National Planning Policy Framework (the Framework) states that planning policies should support economic growth in rural areas in order to create jobs and prosperity, and that local plans should support the sustainable growth and expansion of all types of business including sustainable rural tourism and leisure developments that benefit businesses in rural areas, communities and visitors, and which respect the character of the countryside.

6. The appellant's plan to grow and expand the aviation enterprise and to provide pilot training courses and education and meeting room facilities would have economic and social benefits which weigh in the scheme's favour, and would accord with paragraph 28 of the Framework.

7. Manager's accommodation would also be provided for security purposes. The appellant has not sufficiently justified whether this could be secured by other means. Nevertheless I am satisfied that such accommodation could be reasonably sized and form only a relatively small part of the overall building such that its provision would not amount to any significant harm.

8. However, it is clear from the indicative plans that the business model put forward by the appellant includes a significant proportion of residential accommodation. Along with the manager's accommodation, the building would provide three bedrooms all with en-suite bathrooms, a separate bathroom, kitchen, dining room and 'den' living space. The appellant argues that the bedroom accommodation would be required in connection with the pilot training use. However, little evidence is before me to demonstrate why overnight and other facilities as shown are necessary to the level sought by the appellant, or why local hotel accommodation could not meet this need, particularly as it has not been sufficiently demonstrated whether or not the use of the site is and would be, at best, intermittent. The need and provision of integral garage spaces is also not sufficiently explained. It is also evident from the indicative drawings that it is the intention for the training and meeting room section of the building to be independently accessed, and be separate to the residential accommodation use.

9. I accept that these plans are indicative and therefore the details of the proposal could be changed at a later stage. However, to do so would require a fundamental alteration to the nature of the proposal before me. On the evidence before me, I find that the level of development sought has not been adequately justified. It would not promote sustainable development, and would conflict with policies SG2, SG3 and SG4 of the South Holland Local Plan. These seek to direct development within settlement limits and in accordance with settlement hierarchy, and will only permit development in open countryside which is essential in the proposed location and where the need outweighs the impact.

10. As currently indicated, the proposal would be tantamount to the creation of a dwelling house in the open countryside. It would not accord with Local Plan policy HS7 or with paragraph 55 of the Framework, which states that isolated new homes in the countryside should be avoided unless special circumstances arise and that new housing in the open countryside will only be permitted where it is proven to be essential to meet the needs of agriculture, forestry or other workers.

Conclusion

11. For the reasons given above I conclude that the appeal should be dismissed.

R Allen

INSPECTOR